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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEVADA

HEATHER LYNN CARRIKER,)	
)	Case No.: 2:21-cv-00671-NJK
Plaintiff,)	ORDER GRANTING
)	UNOPPOSED MOTION FOR EXTENSION OF
vs.)	TIME TO FILE CERTIFIED
)	ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD AND ANSWER
ANDREW SAUL,)	
Commissioner of Social Security,)	
)	(FIRST REQUEST)
Defendant.)	

1 Defendant, Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security (the “Commissioner”), by and through
2 his undersigned attorneys, hereby moves for a 60-day extension of time to file the Certified
3 Administrative Record (CAR) and answer to Plaintiff’s Complaint. The CAR and answer to Plaintiff’s
4 Complaint are due to be filed by July 12, 2021. This is the Commissioner’s first request for an extension
5 of time.

6 Defendant makes this request in good faith and for good cause, because the CAR, which must be
7 filed with the Answer and is necessary to adjudicate the case, is not yet available. The public health
8 emergency pandemic caused by COVID-19 has significantly impacted operations in the Social Security
9 Administration’s Office of Appellate Operations (OAO) in Falls Church, Virginia, which is responsible
10 for producing the CAR that must be filed with the Answer, per 42 U.S.C. §§ 405(g) and (h). As detailed
11 in the attached declaration from Jebby Rasputnis, Executive Director of the OAO, beginning mid-March
12 2020, OAO restricted physical access to the Falls Church building, which impacted the production of
13 CARs because physical access was previously required to produce CARs. OAO has since developed and
14 employed a new business process to produce CARs. Much of the difficulty in producing CARs stemmed
15 from the old process of transmitting hearing recordings to vendors for transcription, how the vendors
16 transcribed the recordings, and how the vendors provided the completed transcripts to OAO. OAO
17 changed this process by reworking how the audio files are submitted, seeking additional vendor capacity,
18 and increasing in-house transcription capacity. With these changes, OAO is now able to produce more
19 than 700 transcripts per week, a significant increase over the pre-COVID-19 average of 300–400 hearing
20 transcripts per week.

21 Despite these improvements, OAO still faces a significant backlog of cases due to the combined
22 effects of pandemic-related disruption and a marked increase in district court filings. New case receipts
23 during the last quarter of FY 2020 and the first quarter of FY 2021 increased (on average) to 2,257 case
24 receipts per month, as compared to 1,458 per month for the same period one year before. Overall, the
25 timeframe for delivering a CAR in an individual case has improved, and the current average processing
26 time is 138 days. Because of this, OAO is making progress in its backlog of cases. At the end of January
2021, OAO had 11,109 pending cases. As of June 8, 2021, OAO had 6,927 pending cases, representing a

1 decrease in our backlog of more than 4,182 cases over the last four months. OAO continues to work on
2 increasing productivity by collaborating with our vendors and searching out and utilizing technological
3 enhancements. Defendant asks this Court for its continued patience as OAO works to increase its
4 efficiency and production of CARs, reduce the current backlog, and address rising court case filings.
5 Counsel for Defendant further states that the Office of General Counsel (OGC) is monitoring receipt of
6 transcripts on a daily basis and is committed to filing Answers as soon as practicable upon receipt and
7 review of the administrative records.

8 Given the volume of pending cases, Defendant requests an extension in which to respond to the
9 Complaint until September 10, 2021. If Defendant is unable to produce the certified administrative
10 record necessary to file an Answer in accordance with this Order, Defendant shall request an additional
11 extension prior to the due date.

12 On July 7, 2021, the undersigned conferred with Plaintiff's counsel, who has no opposition to the
13 requested extension.

14 It is therefore respectfully requested that Defendant be granted an extension of time to file the CAR
15 and answer to Plaintiff's Complaint, through and including September 10, 2021.

16 Dated: July 7, 2021

17 CHRISTOPHER CHIOU
18 Acting United States Attorney

19 /s/ Christopher J. Bella
20 CHRISTOPHER J. BELLA
21 Special Assistant United States Attorney

22
23 IT IS SO ORDERED:

24 
25 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

26 DATED: July 8, 2021